

Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS)

2022 benefits for retirees with Medicare

To play a recorded version of this webinar click here:
[September Webinar Recording](#)

Agenda

- Vermont Blue Advantage introduction
- Medicare basics and eligibility
- Customized benefits
- Enrollment process
- Next steps and resources



Introduction to Vermont Blue Advantage

- We are pleased to announce an exciting change in the way we deliver health insurance to retirees with Medicare in the Teachers' Retirement System
- Last fall we went out to bid to secure health insurance for our retired teachers with Medicare. The winning bid emerged after a thoroughly vetted and competitive process, which was Vermont Blue Advantage, an affiliate of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont.
- Beginning January 1, 2022, we will be moving retirees with Medicare Part A and Part B to a Medicare Advantage plan provided by Vermont Blue Advantage.
- While we recognize that change can always bring some anxiety, we believe this change is positive. It will not only provide benefit plans of equal or greater value but provide them at a lower cost to our Medicare-eligible retirees and their dependents.
- The reason for the change is simple – it allows us to closely match the benefits provided to Medicare-eligible members and provide significant enhancements (including a new vision and hearing benefit), at reduced premium averaging between 30% to 40%.
- We have negotiated future year rate caps, so that the new arrangement will continue to produce premium savings for members through 2026.

Eligibility and rates

- **Factors that determine your eligibility for VSTRS health insurance and premium rates:**
 - Which VSTRS Group you were in at the time of retirement?
 - What is your subsidy rate? (based on years of service, date of hire, etc.)
 - Who is covered on your health insurance policy?
 - Were you eligible for spousal subsidy at the time of retirement?
 - Did you elect the premium reduction option at retirement?

Eligibility and rates, continued

- The amount you will pay depends on a number of factors as noted above, however the following example is a cost comparison for single coverage at the 80%/20% premium subsidy split by plan:

Current VEHI Retirees with Medicare Part A & B Rates:

Single Coverage 80/20	Total Premium	State Share	Retiree Share
Comprehensive	\$575.73	\$460.58	\$115.15
JY	\$704.60	\$460.58	\$244.02
VSTRS 65	\$212.77	\$212.77	\$0.00

VBA Retirees with Medicare Part A & B Rates (effective January 1, 2022):

Single Coverage 80/20	Total Premium	State Share	Retiree Share
Comprehensive	\$355.31	\$284.25	\$71.06
JY	\$363.98	\$284.25	\$79.73
VSTRS 65	\$79.98	\$79.98	\$0.00

For specific information about your eligibility and rates, please contact VSTRS directly at Tre.RetirementOffice@vermont.gov or by phone at (802) 828-2305.

Additional premium rate information is also available on the VSTRS website at: <https://www.vermonttreasurer.gov/content/retirement/teacher/group-health>

Welcome to Vermont Blue Advantage

Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Vermont's Medicare Advantage Solution

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont has formed Vermont Blue Advantage to deliver excellent products that offer peace of mind and savings to long-term partners and their retirees.

The new Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS) plans are Medicare Advantage versions of the familiar VSTRS plans:

- Comprehensive with prescription drug coverage
- JY with prescription drug coverage
- VSTRS 65 – medical only

Your plans include valuable benefit and program enhancements, access to the National Blue network of providers, and the unmatched confidence that comes from carrying a BlueCross® BlueShield® card in your wallet.

Choice
of Familiar Plans

Benefit
Enhancements

Program
Enhancements

National Blue
Provider Network*

*Plus the flexibility to use non-network provider that participate with Medicare and accept Medicare reimbursement.

Medicare Basics and Eligibility

Medicare Overview

Medicare is the federal health insurance program administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for:

- Adults aged 65 and older and eligible to receive Social Security
- People under age 65, permanently disabled and have received Social Security disability benefits for at least two years
- People with end stage renal disease (kidney failure) or Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease

MEDICARE IS MADE UP OF FOUR PARTS



*Part D is available through private insurers. Not all Medicare Advantage plans include prescription drug coverage.

What is Medicare Advantage?

- Medicare Advantage is a way to get your Medicare Part A and Part B Coverage, plus other services, like vision and hearing through a private insurance company.
 - You're still in the Medicare Program.
 - You still need Medicare Part A and Part B and pay your Part B premium.
- Medicare Advantage Plans, sometimes called “Part C” or “MA Plans,” must follow rules set by Medicare.
- You still have Medicare rights and protections.
- Some plans offer extra benefits beyond Original Medicare – like vision, hearing and lower out-of-pocket costs.
- You can't buy and don't need a Medigap/Medicare Supplement plan.
- For your 2022 plan, you'll receive a new ID card from Vermont Blue Advantage
- Put your red, white and blue Medicare card away and use your new Vermont Blue Advantage card at your providers and the pharmacy.

Medicare Advantage Eligibility

To be eligible for these Medicare Advantage plans, you and or your dependents must:

- Reside in the United States
- Have a United States physical address on file
- Be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B
- Continue to pay Part B premium, as you do today
- Only be enrolled in one Medicare Advantage plan
- You, your spouse or any other dependents must meet the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System's qualifications for health insurance benefits.

Customized Benefits

Your Vermont Blue Advantage Plan Options

- The Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS) is continuing to offer retirees with Medicare Part A and Part B three plan options, which will closely match your current coverage.
- The new Medicare Advantage version of these plans will replace your current retiree coverage.
- The three (3) Medicare Advantage plans available to you effective January 1, 2022:
 - Comprehensive with Prescription Drug Coverage
 - JY with Prescription Drug Coverage
 - VSTRS 65 - Medical Only

Medicare Advantage customized for you

Familiar benefits available exclusively for retirees and their dependents with Medicare beginning January 1, 2022

- Your new Vermont Blue Advantage plans have been customized to closely match your current benefits and include some valuable enhancements such as hearing and vision benefits.
- Simplicity of an all-in-one plan with a single insurance card from Vermont Blue Advantage.

Medicare Advantage plans are heavily promoted, especially during the Annual Election Period in the Fall of every year. Don't confuse this advertising with your new Medicare Advantage plan through the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System.

Your new plans are not available in the individual market.

Benefit Highlights

This is an overview. You will receive detailed benefit information in the mail in October.

Benefit Category	JY	Comprehensive	VSTRS 65
Medical Deductible	\$100 deductible for specific services (deductible resets each January)	\$300 (deductible resets each January)	None
Medical Out of Pocket Maximum	\$600	\$600	None
Preventive Care	Over 30 screenings and services at \$0 copay		
Other Doctor Office & Specialist Visits	\$20 copay	You pay 20% coinsurance, after \$300 deductible	\$0 copay
Emergency & Urgent Care	\$20 copay		\$0 copay
Inpatient and Outpatient Care in a Hospital	\$0 copay		\$0 copay
Home Health, Rehabilitation & Skilled Nursing Facility Care	\$0 copay		\$0 copay
Part B Drugs, Durable Medical Equipment & Supplies	You pay 20% coinsurance, after \$100 deductible		\$0 copay
Diabetic Equipment & Supplies	\$0 copay	\$0 copay	\$0 copay
Prescription Drug	Copays of \$5 generic, \$20 preferred brand name, \$45 non-preferred brand name, per 30-day supply		Not covered
Valuable Extras (new)	Telehealth, vision exam, allowance for glasses and contacts, hearing exam and allowance for hearing aids included in all plans		

Prescription Drugs for Comprehensive and JY plans

- The pharmacy benefit manager is changing to Express Scripts.
- You do not have a prescription drug deductible.
- Your annual Part D prescription drug out-of-pocket maximum remains at \$600.
- Copays for drugs per 30-day supply remain as follows:
 - \$5 for generic
 - \$20 copay for preferred brand-name drugs
 - \$45 for non-preferred brand-name drugs
- Most of the major pharmacy chains are in the pharmacy network.

Please note: VSTRS 65 does not include prescription drug coverage.

Prescription Drugs, continued

- We will transfer your prior authorizations for non-narcotic prescription drugs, requiring no action by you.
- The formulary is a list of prescription drugs that are covered by your health plan. The new plans use an Express Scripts formulary, which will be similar to your current formulary.
 - Most drugs will be subject to the same or lower copay.
 - We will provide a formulary online prior to January 2022 and explain options if you are taking one of the few drugs that will be subject to a higher copay.
- You will also have the availability of transition fills for prescription drugs with formulary or prior authorization restrictions during the first 90 days of your plan.
- If you are using mail order for your prescriptions today, you will need to sign up with the new vendor, Express Scripts. We will provide you instructions on how to do this prior to January 2022.
 - We will transfer open refills for mail order prescription drugs to Express Scripts for you.

Please note: VSTRS 65 does not include prescription drug coverage.

National Access, Worldwide Recognition

Your plans offer network flexibility, too!

- **Your plan is a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), with the same benefits in and out-of-network**
- **You have access to doctors and hospitals that participate with Medicare within Vermont and the larger Blue Cross nationwide network**
 - 92% of doctor and hospitals across the country participate in the Blue Cross nationwide network and Medicare
- **Your plan also covers any provider that participates with Medicare, nationwide**
 - There are some providers such as counselors and naturopaths that cannot and do not participate with Medicare
- **You can travel with confidence.** All plans include worldwide ambulance, urgent care, and emergency care coverage at the same or lower cost share

Enhancements to your plan

Vision coverage through Vision Service Plan (VSP)

- **\$0** Routine eye exam once per plan year through a VSP provider.
- **\$0** Routine eye exam once per plan year through a non-VSP provider.
- **\$200** Allowance for eyewear every 12 months through a VSP provider.
 - Contact lenses
 - Eyeglasses



Hearing coverage through NationsHearing

- **\$0** Hearing exams through NationsHearing provider.
- Higher copay for hearing exam through non-NationsHearing provider.
- Hearing aid allowance of **\$1,250** per ear per year (\$2,500 max) through a NationsHearing provider.



Online Visits through Amwell

- **\$0** copay for online/telehealth visits through Amwell for urgent care, mental health, psychiatry and nutrition counseling.



PATH and VBA Wellness Incentive

- **PATH Wellness Program provided by VSTRS through the Vermont Education Health Initiative (VEHI)**
 - VSTRS will continue to provide access to VEHI's wellness program, PATH, which offers retirees state of the art services to build and maintain healthy behaviors at home and in the community.
 - The PATH program provides wellness incentives and a smattering of ways to gain skills, knowledge and strategies about physical, emotional, social and spiritual health.
 - To learn more about the VEHI PATH program visit:
<https://secure.tomypath.com/vehi/login/default>
- **Be rewarded through Vermont Blue Advantage**
 - Earn incentives, such as a \$50 gift card for receiving a yearly wellness visit.
 - It is important to stay on track with preventative measures such as vaccines and routine screenings. That's why Vermont Blue Advantage offers member incentives, including a \$50 wellness incentive for receiving an annual wellness physical exam.

Note: VSTRS provides the PATH program through a direct contract with Vermont Health Education Initiative (VEHI).

Enrollment Process

Easy Enrollment Process

1. You will receive a packet in the mail in early October with instructions, benefit descriptions and forms.
2. If you want to continue with the Vermont Blue Advantage equivalent of your current Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS) plan, **DO NOTHING**. You will automatically be enrolled into the plan.
3. If you want to change to a different VSTRS Vermont Blue Advantage plan, **complete the plan change form and return to VSTRS by October 27th**.
4. If you want to decline all VSTRS health insurance coverage, **complete the opt-out form and return to VSTRS by October 27th**.

Enrollment Packet Documents

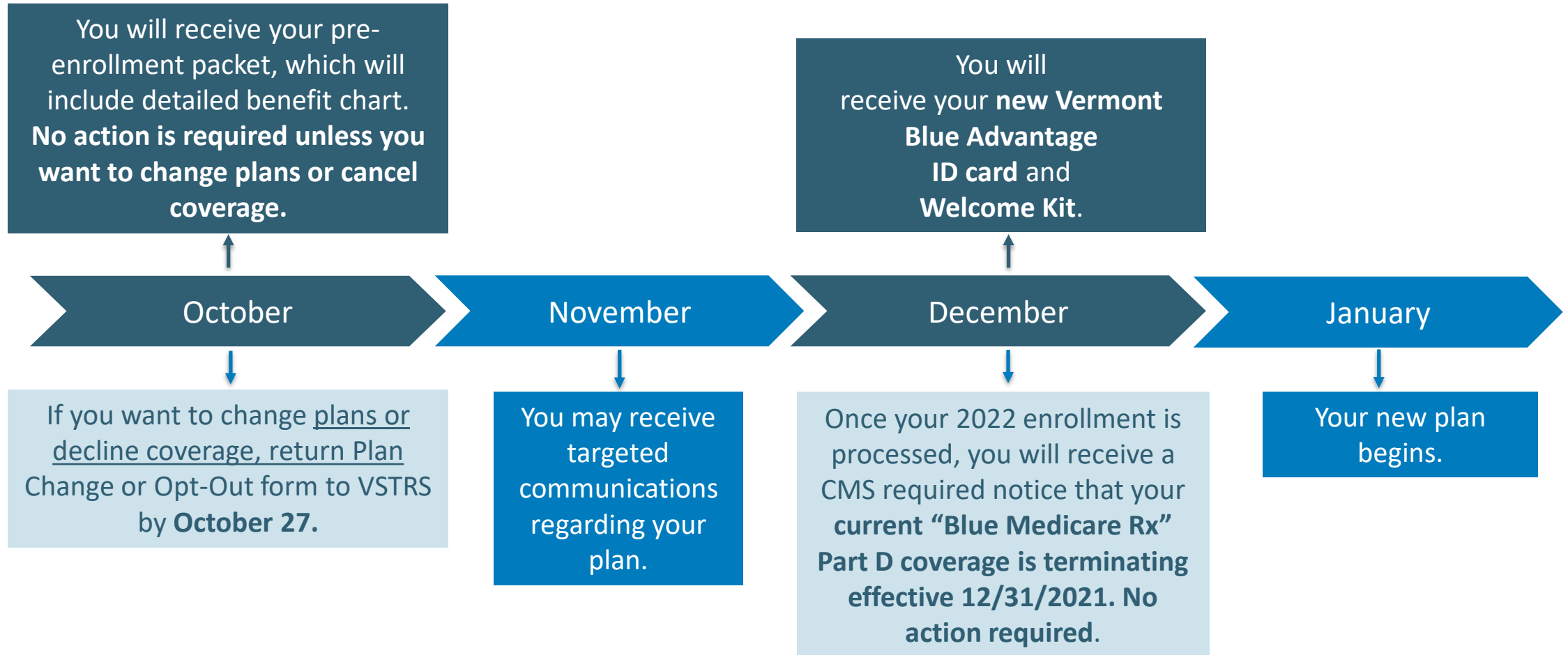
Your packet arriving in October will include the following documents:

- **Cover Letter:** explains the options available to you and what actions, if any, that you will need to take
- **Benefit-at-a-Glance:** a detailed benefit description of the three (3) Vermont Blue Advantage plans offered by the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS)
- **Plan Change Form:** you will submit this form if you want to change to a different VSTRS Vermont Blue Advantage plan
- **Opt-Out Form:** you will submit this form if you want to decline VSTRS health insurance coverage

Note: If you are changing plans or opting out of VSTRS health insurance coverage, the plan change form or opt-out form needs to be received at the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System office by October 27th. If you are changing plans and the form is received after that date, there is a possibility that your ID cards and Welcome Kit will not be received by early December.

Next Steps and Resources

What to expect in the next few months



Next steps, continued

When you enroll here's what you can expect.

- You will receive a Welcome Kit in December, with complete detailed benefit information (Evidence of Coverage and Member Benefit Chart). Please read your plan documents thoroughly when you receive them.
- You will receive your Vermont Blue Advantage ID card in December. Please place it in your wallet or a safe space. Put your Medicare card away and in January, use your new Vermont Blue Advantage card at your providers and the pharmacy.
- Welcome calls will be made by your new Vermont Blue Advantage team in the first quarter of 2022 to answer any questions you may have. The call center is based in Michigan and exclusively services seniors.
- Throughout the year, expect more communications and outreach from Vermont Blue Advantage. Medicare Advantage Plans adhere to high quality standards, and in order to do that good work, we must be in touch with our retirees. We are a partner in your health!

Resources

- Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System page on Vermont Blue Advantage website:
www.vermontblueadvantage.com/vstrs
- Vermont Blue Advantage Transition Support Team:
Call **(800) 344-6690**, Monday-Friday, 7:00 am – 4:30 pm EST
(TTY: 1-800-535-2227)
- The Retirement Office:
 - Contact VSTRS for information about premium contribution and eligibility for VSTRS retiree benefits at (802) 828-2305 or toll free (800) 642-3191
 - VSTRS publishes premium contribution information here:
<https://www.vermonttreasurer.gov/content/retirement/vstrs/plans>

Thank you!

- Be on the lookout for materials early October.
- Your new ID card will come in December.
- Additional questions? Visit the web page www.vermontblueadvantage.com/vstrs
- Or call **1-800-344-6690**
(TTY:1-800-535-2227)
Monday through Friday,
7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. EST



Disclaimers

- Vermont Blue Advantage is a PPO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Vermont Blue Advantage depends on contract renewal.
- Out-of-network/non- contracted providers are under no obligation to treat Vermont Blue Advantage members, except in emergency situations. Please call our customer service number or see your Evidence of Coverage for more information, including the cost- sharing that applies to out-of-network services.
- Other Pharmacies/Physicians/Providers are available in our network.
- Vermont Blue Advantage complies with applicable Federal and state civil rights law and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, gender identity, or sex.
- French: ATTENTION : Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 1-844-510-2583 (ATS : 711).
- Spanish: ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-844-510-2583 (TTY: 711).

Preventive Services - \$0 copayment

- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening
- Alcohol misuse screening and counseling
- Annual physical exam
- Annual wellness visit
- Bone mass measurement
- Breast cancer screening (mammogram)
- Cardiovascular disease risk reduction visit
- Cardiovascular disease testing
- Cervical and vaginal cancer screening
- Colorectal cancer screenings (colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, guaiac-based fecal occult blood test, fecal immunochemical test, or DNA based colorectal screening)
- Depression screening
- Diabetes screening and diabetes self-management training
- Glaucoma screening
- Health and wellness education programs
- HIV screening
- Immunizations, including COVID-19, flu, Hepatitis B, and Pneumococcal shots
- Intensive behavioral therapy for obesity
- Medical nutrition therapy services
- Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program
- Prostate cancer screenings
- Screening and intensive behavioral therapy for obesity
- Screening for lung cancer with low dose computed tomography
- Screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and counseling to prevent STIs